

AMENDMENTS TO THE DRAWINGS

In Fig. 10, "CONSTANT VOLTAGE CIRCUIT" indicated by reference numeral 125 has been amended to -- CONSTANT CURRENT CIRCUIT--.

REMARKS

Claims 1, 3-5 and 7-10 are pending in the application. New claims 9 and 10 have been added.

Drawings

In Fig. 10, "CONSTANT VOLTAGE CIRCUIT" indicated by reference numeral 125 has been amended to --CONSTANT CURRENT CIRCUIT-- so that it is consistent with the description in the specification.

The Examiner is respectfully requested to approve and enter this drawing change.

Specification

- a. The abstract of the disclosure has been objected to because it exceeds 150 words.

In view of this, the abstract of the disclosure has been amended to overcome this objection.

- b. The abstract of the disclosure has been objected to because there is a legal phraseology such as "means."

In view of this, the abstract of the disclosure has been amended to overcome this objection.

- c. The Examiner alleges that the title of the invention is not descriptive.

In view of this, the title of the invention has been amended to:--WASHING MACHINE WITH ION ELUTING AND IMBALANCE CORRECTING UNITS-- so that it is now descriptive of the present invention.

d. The Examiner has requested that the specification be reviewed to place it in better form for U.S. practice.

In view of this, the specification has been reviewed and minor changes have been made thereto as requested by the Examiner.

In view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, the Examiner is respectfully requested to reconsider and withdraw the foregoing objections to the specification.

Inventorship

The Examiner alleges that claims 1-8 are directed to an invention not patentably distinct from claims 8-13 of commonly assigned U.S. Patent Application No. 10/535247.

Applicants respectfully submit that the present application and U.S. Patent Application No. 10/535247 were, at the time of the invention of the present application was made, owned by SHARP KABUSHIKI KAISHA. In view of this, Applicants believe that a rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) based upon U.S. Patent Application No. 10/535247 should be precluded.

Double Patenting

Claims 1-4 have been provisionally rejected on the ground of nonstatutory obviousness-type double patenting as being unpatentable over claims 8-13 of copending application No. 10/535247.

Claims 5-7 have been provisionally rejected on the ground of nonstatutory obviousness-type double patenting as being unpatentable over claims 8-13 of copending application No. 10/535247.

In view of this, Applicants submit, herewith, a Terminal Disclaimer disclaiming the terminal part of the statutory term of any patent granted on the instant application which would extend beyond the expiration date of the full statutory term of any patent granted on Application No. 10/535247, filed on November 14, 2003, to overcome this rejection.

The Examiner is respectfully requested to reconsider and withdraw this rejection.

Claim Rejections - 35 U.S.C. § 112

Claims 1-8 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph, because of some informalities.

1. Claim 1 has been amended to clarify that the “imbalance correction means” performs both the “processing different” and the “processing” to overcome this rejection.
2. Claim 1 has been amended to an apparatus claim format to prevent invocation of 35 U.S.C. §112, sixth paragraph.
3. Claims 3-8 have been amended to overcome the rejection. Further, with respect to claim 3, the “amount of supply of the metal ion added water” limitation refers to the amount of the water itself to which the metal ion has been added, and can therefore be expressed in terms of mass or volume.

In view of this, the Examiner is respectfully requested to reconsider and withdraw this rejection.

Claim Rejections - 35 U.S.C. § 103

(a) Claim 1 has been rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over TSE (Japanese Utility-Model Application No. 151219/1979) in view of Ando et al. (JP 2001-276484). This rejection is respectfully traversed.

According to claim 1, as amended, in a case where metal-ion-added water is supplied to the laundry tub before spin-drying rotation, if imbalance is detected during spin-drying rotation, balance correction rinsing is performed with metal-ion-added water supplied.

The foregoing feature offers the benefit of restraining the flowing-off, during imbalance correction, of the metal ion that has attached to laundry.

TSE discloses performing different operations depending on whether or not a softener is added or not in rinsing before spin-drying, and discloses, in particular, inhibiting execution of an imbalance correction cycle in a case where a softener is added so that correction may be performed manually.

Ando discloses performing rinsing while the silver ion generated by electrolysis is supplied.

Applicants submit, however, that even assuming the TSE and Ando can be combined, which Applicants do not admit, TSE in view of Ando fails to disclose or suggest supplying metal-ion-added water during balance correction as recited in claim 1.

The Examiner is respectfully requested to reconsider and withdraw this rejection.

(b) Claims 1-8 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Hird (WO 01/071084) in view of Ando. This rejection is respectfully traversed.

Hird discloses performing balance correction by rotation of drum portions relative to each other if imbalance is detected. In other words, Hird discloses performing balance correction without water being added.

As stated in the foregoing, Ando merely discloses performing rinsing while the silver ion generated by electrolysis is supplied.

Therefore, even assuming that Hird and Ando can be combined, which Applicants do not admit, Hird in view of Ando fails to disclose or suggest supplying metal-ion-added water during balance correction as recited in claim 1.

Claims 2-9, variously dependent on claim 1, are allowable at least for their dependency on claim 1.

The Examiner is respectfully requested to reconsider and withdraw this rejection.

New Claims

Claims 9 and 10, dependent on claim 1, are allowable at least for their dependency on claim 1.

Support for the features recited in claim 9 is disclosed in page 39, lines 9-14 of the specification of the present application.

Support for the features recited in claim 10 is disclosed in page 38, lines 9-19 of the specification.

A favorable determination by the Examiner and allowance of these claims is earnestly solicited

CONCLUSION

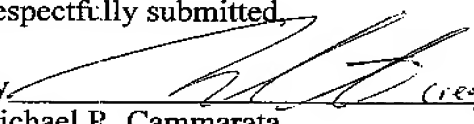
Accordingly, in view of the above amendments and remarks, reconsideration of the rejections and objections, and allowance of the pending claims are earnestly solicited.

Should there be any outstanding matters that need to be resolved in the present application, the Examiner is respectfully requested to contact Maki Hatsumi, Reg. No. 40,417, at the telephone number of the undersigned below, to conduct an interview in an effort to expedite prosecution in connection with the present application.

If necessary, the Commissioner is hereby authorized in this, concurrent, and future replies to charge payment or credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No. 02-2448 for any additional fees required under 37.C.F.R. §§ 1.16 or 1.17; particularly, extension of time fees.

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Respectfully submitted,

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